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**U.S. REQUESTING EXTRADITION OF ALLEGED LEADER
OF A COLOMBIAN NARC-TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that the United States Attorneys Office for the Southern District of New York will seek to extradite DIEGO FERNANDO MURILLO-BEJARANO, a/k/a "Don Berna," a/k/a "Don Bernardo," a/k/a "Adolfo Paz," allegedly one of the top leaders of the Autodefensas Unidas De Colombia ("AUC"), a right-wing Colombian paramilitary organization designated by the United States Department of State as a foreign terrorist organization, to the Southern District of New York for conspiring to import thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States.

MURILLO-BEJARANO surrendered to Colombian authorities on May 27, 2005, after a three-day, nationwide manhunt. MURILLO-BEJARANO has been accused, in Colombia, of the murder of a Colombian lawmaker and two other individuals.

According to the Indictment, which was unsealed in July

2004, and extradition papers filed with the Colombian Government today, the AUC is an illegal paramilitary organization based in Colombia which is engaged in warfare with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia ("FARC"), Colombia's main guerilla group. To support its terrorist paramilitary activities, and to enrich its leaders, the AUC is also involved in narcotics trafficking, and is responsible for the importation of multi-ton quantities of cocaine into the United States, it was charged. According to the Indictment, the AUC is involved in overseeing the transportation of cocaine by sea, on board speedboats and cargo vessels, from Colombia to the United States, either directly or through third countries in Latin America.

As alleged in the Indictment, MURILLO-BEJARANO holds the title of Inspector General of the AUC, but is the de facto leader of the AUC, in charge of its narcotics-trafficking activities, including all of its cocaine transportation and financial operations. MURILLO-BEJARANO has maintained his power in the AUC in part from the proceeds of his drug-trafficking activities, it was charged.

The Indictment also charges MURILLO-BEJARANO with conspiring to launder narcotics proceeds. Cocaine shipped to the United States by the AUC generated millions of dollars in New York and other U.S. cities. At the direction of individuals working under the supervision of MURILLO-BEJARANO's organization, these sums were placed in bags or suitcases and exchanged at pre-arranged locations. The alleged purpose of these transfers was

to allow the conspiracy to repatriate narcotics proceeds to Colombia while concealing the illicit nature of the funds.

Mr. KELLEY stated: "We remain committed to investigating, prosecuting and extraditing the most powerful and violent Colombian drug lords who destabilize their own country and send poison to the United States. We look forward to bringing to justice this top leader of one of the world's largest cocaine cartels."

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police.

The prosecution is being conducted by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit, under the auspices of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. Assistant United States Attorneys ERIC SNYDER and ANIRUDH BANSAL are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

